



*Session 3: Contextualizing mainstreaming experiences:  
Tackling the challenges and opportunities of migration in small island  
states – policy and institutional aspects*

**Statement by Laurent de Boeck, Director,  
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Honourable Representative of Switzerland,  
Honourable Representative of Mauritius,  
Distinguished Participants,

The African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Observatory on Migration, which I represent, works in particular with 12 pilot countries in the 6 ACP regions. According to the United Nations, four of those can be characterized as Small Island Developing States, namely Haiti and Trinidad & Tobago in the Caribbean, and Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea in the Pacific.

Before explaining the specific experience of these four countries, allow me to share with you three general points:

The first point I would like to make here relates to the fact that the **South-South migration and human development dynamics in these countries are very diverse**. Despite movements of people to Northern America in the case of the two Caribbean countries and to Australia and New Zealand from PNG and Timor-Leste being more important, I am focusing on mobility in the South as a key and yet hardly considered aspect of international migration. South-South migration is also at the heart of the mandate of the ACP Observatory on Migration.



The second point I would like to raise here is that **the experience of Small Island States cannot be generalized**. The ‘mainstreaming’ process needs to be tailored to the national context and changing migration dynamics. In most cases, intra- and extra-regional migration to other developing countries is hardly known. It is therefore important to **start any policy development process with an analysis of the evidence base**.

Thirdly, and related to the point I just made, is the fact that **most of these countries are still in the early stages of a ‘mainstreaming’ exercise**. In general, the topic of migration and development still tends to be approached from a perspective based on the ‘mantras’ of remittances from the North, diasporas residing in the North and a focus on the dangers of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of migrants. A much more nuanced approach needs to be taken, including the South-South perspective, as both South-North and South-South mobility can entail positive and negative effects on human development.

I will now consider the experiences of the four countries.

**Haiti** has faced one of the gravest humanitarian disasters imaginable 2.5 years ago and is still recovering from its human losses. In addition to the high death toll, 1.5 million persons were internally displaced in January 2010, affecting housing, food security, infrastructure and employment in the rural areas that hosted most of those displaced people. As of now, this number of IDPS in and around Port-au-Prince has been reduced to 421,000 in 602 camps in May 2012 according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). A remarkable role was played by Haitian diaspora members in the aftermath of the earthquake, responding quicker than the international community to the financial and most urgent needs of the Haitian population.

What role diaspora members staying in the region played is the focus of a study currently being launched by the ACP Observatory. A third important aspect is emigration from Haiti within the region, including to the Dominican Republic and other Caribbean destinations but also anecdotal evidence on Haitians having moved to Brazil recently, among other destinations. While emigration to the US and Canada outnumbers regional migration of Haitians, the latter is far less known and studied and tends to be mostly irregular.

It is clear that the recent experience of Haiti will affect any ‘mainstreaming’ process in the future. The diasporas’ role in the reconstruction is an important pillar of the mainstreaming exercise in Haiti, which will be underpinned by the evidence collected by the study in order to provide the evidence base for their integration into reconstruction and development policies. Other forms of diaspora engagement can include diaspora tourism, entrepreneurship, philanthropic activities, diaspora volunteering and advocacy, which will all be considered in the survey.

A second important aspect of the mainstreaming exercise should focus on the human rights of both the displaced population, but also Haitian emigrants abroad. This includes the issue of stateless Haitian children in the Dominican Republic and the protection of the human rights of emigrants in the region. The impact of migration on families should also be taken into consideration in this process.

Therefore important lessons can be learned from the Haitian experience in terms of implicating the diaspora members in reconstruction and how to protect emigrants abroad to enable them to become true ‘agents of development’. As in any country, their implications can only be successful if certain and favourable conditions in Haiti are ensured.

The South-South migration experience of **Trinidad and Tobago** is very different. Due to its thriving economy, Trinidad and Tobago is an immigration country in the Caribbean. Over the past years, flows have diversified with respect to countries of origin and types of movement. Labour mobility is now an important reason for immigrating into the country. Being the ethnically most diverse country in the region, immigration is not considered a contentious issue.

As for the ‘mainstreaming’ process, the lead entity at the national level, the Ministry for National Security, is focusing on the development of a Migration Management Unit within the Ministry as well as a Diaspora Unit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Communications. This will clearly upscale the importance accorded to mobility at the national level. This centralization of the comprehensive process of mobility can help to support both immigrants and emigrants through respective units. They are in the lead for the ‘mainstreaming’ process based on capacity building by the intra-ACP Migration Facility of which the Observatory represents one of three components.

In **Papua New Guinea**, migration is a rather recent concern. Traditional migration exists from one village to the other but is limited by historical land divisions and has never been approached as a research topic. New internal migration patterns, reflecting the demographic growth in the capital, have remained outside any data collection or analysis.

On the other hand, PNG does not experience significant international migration as both the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is considerably lower than the global shares of migrants. The multi-billion dollar project on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is likely to have an impact in terms of development, by boosting skilled labour migration within and to the country, enhancing the skills of national workers and attracting foreign investment.

Emigration from PNG has also been very small since its independence in 1975, notwithstanding relatively low growth and high unemployment rates over long periods. As a high percentage of the population lives in rural areas, the lack of mobility and, consequently, of access to higher education, may be one of the explanations for the still low percentage of highly skilled citizens. Additionally, while migration policies of developed countries have recently placed primary emphasis on skilled and business migration, PNG has not benefited from preferential access to any developed countries, being subject to their general immigration policies.

For these reasons, Papua New Guinea is still at the early stages of a mainstreaming process. The ACP Observatory is commissioning a study on the impact of South-South migration on human development in the country at the moment, which will aim to fill in the gap in information and analysis on the topic. A second study will focus on labour mobility, a topic that is receiving considerable attention at the regional level in the planned negotiations of a Temporary Movement of Natural Persons (TMNP) scheme of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat.

Being a relatively young country, **Timor-Leste** is both an immigration and emigration country in the region. It attracts a large number of irregular migrants. Overall, and as in other countries, migration data is scarce and not very reliable.

On the other hand, emigration is often not an option for younger Timorese, as certain financial capital is needed. The country also faced internal displacements in 2006.



For these reasons, the ACP Observatory's studies focus on irregular migration, Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of migrants as well the impact of internal migration on human development in Timor-Leste. This information can then help to foster a mainstreaming approach.

Finally, I would also like to take this opportunity to inform you that a part of our national consultations in each of the pilot countries and regions of the ACP Observatory revealed the need for a set of tailor-made indicators to measure the specific impacts South-South migration has on development. This is true for small island States, but also became evident for the entire ACP zone. In response to this lack, and in order to better assess, monitor and evaluate the impact of migration on development, the Observatory has developed a set of indicators for impact measurement.

This new tool gathers 48 indicators, all falling within eight different categories, namely:

- (i) Those measuring **economic** growth and assets, for example migrant's wage differentials before and after migration, remittance levels through time, employment levels in both origin and destination countries, investment rates, demographic aspects, levels of trade and consumption, and foreign exchange rates, for example ;
- (ii) Another important category is the one which encompasses the **educational** impacts of migration on development, measuring for example educational levels and achievements of migrants. This entails a comparison during the entire migration process, as well as an evaluation of the education policy in the country of origin, the degree of provision of private education, availability of teachers, and an assessment of the quality of education;
- (iii) The '**health**' category includes indicators which measure the provision and quality of health services in countries of origin, and specifically assesses the health policy, the degree of provision of private healthcare, the availability of health professionals and healthcare quality;
- (iv) Within the category of '**gender**', we have included indicators which measure the impacts of female migrants and women in a migrant-yielding household, measuring, for example, their income levels, their education levels, the involvement of migrant women into the decision-process, as well as those stayed behind in terms of their access to financial resources, changes in expectations and degree of autonomy.

Gender roles are also assessed in terms of changes in perceptions or in the sexual division of labour at both a household and societal levels;

- (v) Another category measures changes at the **societal level** as a whole as a consequence of migration, for instance changing values in terms of traditional culture and norms, and changing family structures;
- (vi) The category of '**Governance and Human Rights**' measures impacts migration may have upon governance in countries of origin, such as the degree of promotion and protection of human rights , the trust citizens have in their Governments and society, relative power among groups within the society, or the degree of criminality;
- (vii) The seventh category deals with the impacts of migration on the **environment**; for instance the degree of environmental protection measured through changes in behaviour and individual actions, the adoption of new technologies, the degree to which migration is influenced by environmental change, etc. ;
- (viii) Finally, the last category encompasses all indicators which measure the '**social transfers**' which take place as part of the migration process, in terms of what many academics have coined as 'social remittances'. This includes for instance the transfer of knowledge, know-how as well as values and practices. This indicator also measures the degree of social involvement of the diasporas in their home countries, in terms of tourism as well as collective remittances to support certain activities and initiatives.

These indicators are currently pilot-tested in Papua New Guinea for example and will be used as a basis for the analysis of the impact of migration on development in the ACP South-South migration.

This is a unique tool which will be made available to any State and institution willing to measure the impact of migration on the various development policy aspects.

To close my presentation, I would like to reiterate **the importance of country ownership** of this process. States should not look at migrants as the solution to their development. Mobility can complement national development strategies, but should not be seen as a 'panacea'. Without a

proper national development strategy and a conducive environment, no migrant can be convinced to return and/or invest. In addition, without **proper protection of migrants' rights**, both of immigrants and emigrants, the potential benefits of migration might be hampered.

We at the ACP Observatory on Migration remain at disposal for providing the evidence needed to foster the positive outcomes of mobility for migrants and their families as well as both origin and destination countries. Our approach is based on the demand from national level, which will then provide the basis for capacity building on how to develop appropriate policies.

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